DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 234 558 EC 160 425

AUTHOR Bilyeu, E. E.
TITLE Practice Makes Closer to Perfect: Alternative Techniques for Teaching Foreign Languages to Learning Disabled Students in the University.
INSTITUTION Central Washington Univ., Ellensburg. Instructional Media Center.
SPONS AGENCY Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 82
GRANT G008006929
NOTE 28p.; A part of the HELDS Project (Higher Education for Learning Disabled Students). For related documents, see EC 160 414-430.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

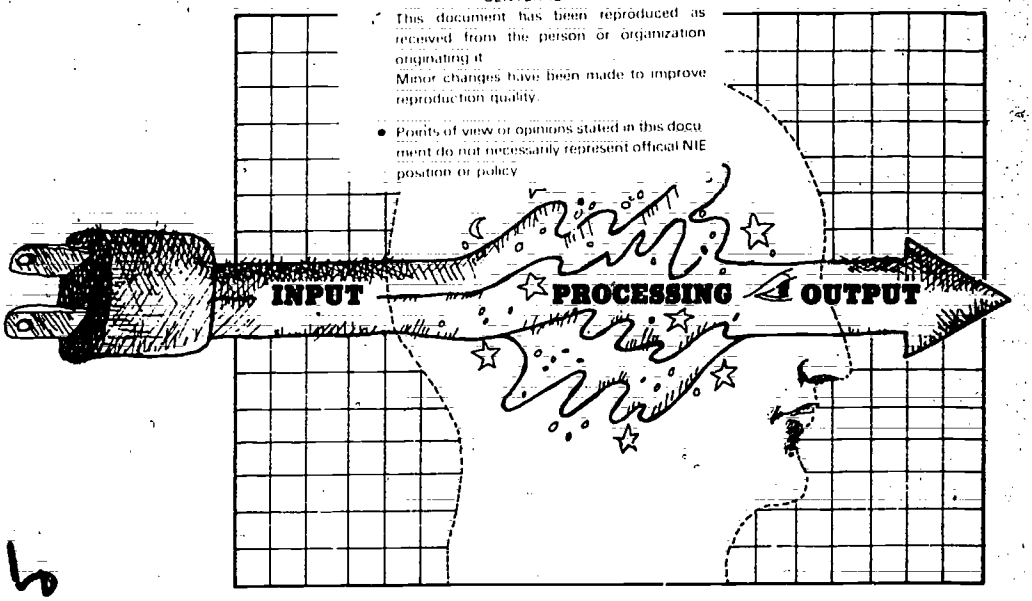
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Students; Higher Education; *Learning Disabilities; *Second Language Instruction; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *Higher Education for Learning Disabled Students

ABSTRACT

The booklet reviews ways in which a foreign language teacher modified instruction as part of the HELDS (Higher Education for Learning Disabled Students) project. Basic principles in foreign language learning are reviewed, and the value of meaningful practice to allow students to focus on content and communication is emphasized. Strategies (such as modeling, opportunity for practice, and varying of the material) are discussed as are components involved in planning a class hour. A framework is offered for presenting and reinforcing objectives. A final comment touches upon the importance of using a variety of learning modalities. A criterion and behavioral checklist for adults with specific learning disabilities is appended. (CL)

PRACTICE MAKES CLOSER TO PERFECT

by
E. E. Bilyeu



THE HELDS PROJECT SERIES
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
2

PRACTICE MAKES CLOSER TO PERFECT

Alternative Techniques for Teaching Foreign Languages to Learning Disabled Students in the University

by
E. E. Bilyeu
Professor of Spanish
Central Washington University

HELDS Project
(Higher Education for
Learning Disabled Students)

Instructional Media Center
Central Washington University
Ellensburg, Washington
1982

FIPSE (Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education)
Project Number 116CH10305
Grant Number G008006929
Director Myrtle Clyde-Snyder

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Donald L. Garrity, President
Donald E. Guy, Dean of Students
Mike Lopez, Assistant Dean, Minority Affairs
William Schmidt and the
Central Washington University
Media Production Department

Participating Faculty

Marco Bicchieri, Anthropology
E. E. Bilyeu, Foreign Language
Ken Briggs, Health Education
Gerald Brunner, Technical and
Industrial Education
Owen Dugmore, Psychology and Counseling
Roger Garrett, Communication
Darwin Goodey, Psychology
Helmi Habib, Chemistry
John Herum, English
Zoltan Kramar, History
Cheryl McKernan, Academic Skills Center
Jan Reinhardtsen, Special Education
Roger Reynolds, Mass Media
Catherine Sands, Anthropology
Frank Sessions, Sociology
John Utzinger, Philosophy
O. W. Wensley, Speech and Audiology
Karl Zink, English

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Participating Departments and Programs

Academic Skills Center,
Donald W. Cummings, Director
Anthropology, Ann Denman, Chair
Chemistry, Don Dietrich, Chair
Communications, Roger Garrett, Chair
Education, Robert Carlton, Chair
Educational Opportunities Program,
Mike Lopez, Director
English, Anthony Canedo, Chair
Health Education,
Kenneth A. Briggs, Director
Philosophy, Chester Z. Keller, Chair
Psychology, John Silva, Chair
Special Education, Dale LeFevre, Director
Sociology, Charles McGeehee, Chair
Technology and Industrial Education,
G. W. Beed, Chair

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Prefaces:

THE HELDS PROJECT AT CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

The acronym HELDS stands for Higher Education for Learning Disabled Students. It represents a model program funded for three years (1980-1983) by the Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE), a division of the Department of Education. This project was funded as a model for other colleges and universities that are preparing to provide equal academic access for the learning disabled students.

Project HELDS had three major focuses. The first was to provide such access for the learning disabled student under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This we did for learning disabled students, most of whom were admitted without modified requirements to Central Washington University. These students were not provided remedial classes. They were enrolled in classes with other college students. The help that we gave was habilitative, rather than remedial, teaching them how to compensate for their weaknesses.

The habilitative training began with identification of those who were learning disabled and included, but was not limited to, such support services as taped textbooks (provided through the services of our Handicapped Student Services Coordinator), readers, writers for tests, extended time for tests, pre-registration with advising to ensure a balanced schedule, the teaching of study skills and tutoring by tutors from the campus-wide tutoring program who were especially trained to tutor learning disabled students.

The second focus of the project was to give a core of twenty faculty teaching classes in the basic and breadth areas a sensitivity to the characteristics of students who were learning disabled so that they could modify their teaching techniques to include the use of more than one modality. This ensured an academic environment conducive to learning for the LD. The faculty members participated in monthly sessions which featured experts in the field of learning disabilities, and in the area of the law (Section 504) that deals with the handicapped student and higher education. There were several sessions in which Central Washington University graduates and currently enrolled LD students shared their viewpoints and experiences with the faculty members. As a result of this some faculty members used the students as resource people in developing curricula for their various disciplines published in this series.

The third focus of the project was to make the university community aware of the characteristics of learning disabilities and of the program at Central. It also sought to encourage other colleges and universities to initiate such programs.

WHAT IS A LEARNING DISABLED STUDENT?

People with learning disabilities have handicaps that are invisible. Their disability is made up of multiple symptoms that have been with them since childhood. Many of them have been described as "dyslexics," but if they are categorized as dyslexic, this will be only one of their many symptoms, as a sore throat is only one of the many symptoms of a cold.

Three concise descriptions of the learning disabled children are provided in Hallahan and Kauffman:

"The National Advisory Committee on Handicapped Children (1968) proposed the following definition, which was adopted by the 91st Congress:

> Children with special disabilities exhibit a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written thinking, talking, reading, writing, spelling, or arithmetic. They include conditions which have been referred to as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, developmental aphasia, etc. They do not include learning problems which are due primarily to visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, to mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or to environmental disadvantage.

Task Force II of a national project (Minimal Brain Dysfunction in Children: Educational, Medical and Health Related Services, Phase Two of a Three-Phase Project, 1969) wrote the following two definitions:

> Children with learning disabilities are those (1) who have educationally significant discrepancies among their sensory-motor, perceptual, cognitive, academic, or related developmental levels which interfere with the performance of educational tasks; (2) who may or may not show demonstrable deviation in central nervous system functioning; and (3) whose disabilities are not secondary to general mental retardation, sensory deprivation or serious emotional disturbance.
>
> Children with learning disabilities are those (1) who manifest an educationally significant discrepancy between estimated academic potential and actual level of academic potential and actual level of academic functioning as related to dysfunctioning in the learning process; (2) who may or may not show

> demonstrable deviation in central nervous system functioning; and (3) whose disabilities are not secondary to general mental retardation, cultural, sensory and/or educational deprivation or environmentally produced serious emotional disturbance.[1]

Although the preceding definitions are concerned with children, the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, in their booklet *Learning Disability: Not just a Problem Children Outgrow*, discusses LD adults who have the same symptoms they had as children. The Department of Education (Reference Hallahan & Kauffman) says that two to three percent of the total public school population are identified as learning disabled and that there are over fifteen million unidentified LD adults in the United States, acknowledging, of course, that people with this problem are not restricted to the United States but are found all over the world.

We know that many learning disabled persons have average or above average intelligence and we know that many of these are gifted. In their company are such famous gifted people as Nelson Rockefeller, Albert Einstein, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Edison, Hans Christian Anderson, Auguste Rodin, William Butler Yeats, and Gustave Flaubert.

The causes of learning disabilities are not known, but in our project each of our identified learning disabled students shows either an unusual pregnancy (trauma at birth, such as delayed delivery, prolonged or difficult delivery) or premature birth. They oftentimes have a genetic family history of similar learning disability problems.

An exerpt from my *Criterion and Behavioral Checklist for Adults With Specific Learning Disabilities* has been included as Appendix A.

/s/ MCS
6 June 1982
Ellensburg, Washington

[1]Daniel P. Hallahan and James M. Kauffman *Exceptional Children* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1978), pp. 121-122.

I. INTRODUCTION

When I first became involved in the HELDS project I assumed that to be of help to Learning Disabled students in a foreign language class, a new methodology would be required. It was a frightening thought. How could I adapt my techniques to serve their special difficulties without sacrificing some proven successful approaches for all other students? Since then I have had several LDs in my beginning Spanish classes. Some of them achieved surprising success. Conversations with them revealed that the teaching techniques which helped them most were those which were also most effective for all students. So, rather than seek a new approach, my present task is to improve my current techniques by emphasizing and refining the different teaching modalities which have already proved to be effective.

In this paper I will review basic principles, present strategies for planning classes, outline several teaching techniques, and discuss the advantages of a variety of practices which are helpful for all students, but particularly for the Learning Disabled.

II. PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING

Although many of the practices of the Audio-Lingual method of the recent past seem to be in current disfavor, I believe that the principles on which that methodology was based are still valid and should still serve as the basis for our present, more eclectic, approach. Many textbooks, and I fear many teachers, have departed from those principles. Without them, students tend to attempt awkwardly to "solve problems" rather than achieve any degree of facility. A review of those principles follows.

Until a better one is coined, I can accept Nelson Brooks' definition of learning as a "change of performance that occurs under the conditions of practice."[1] He continues: "the single paramount fact about language learning is that it concerns, not problem solving, but the formation and performance of habits."[2] The two most important terms are *practice* and *habit*. The first has to do with application and the second with theory.

Robert Lado defines knowing a language as follows:

> "A person knows how to use a language when he can use its structure accurately for *communication* at will, with attention focused on *content*, recalling *automatically* the units and patterns as needed, and holding them for a normal *memory span* at conversational speed, noticing any errors that occur."[3]

[1] Nelson Brooks, *Language and Language Learning* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), p. 46.

[2] Brooks, p. 49.

[3] Robert Lado, *Language Teaching* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 35. (Underlining of words in the quotation are the writer's own for emphasis.)

In the above, several considerations of importance to us as language teachers appear. Too many teachers forget that our primary purpose is to teach students to communicate in the foreign language. Although they give much lip service to that purpose, in actuality they emphasize reading and writing to the detriment of the skills of hearing and of speaking. Seldom are students led to acquire any degree of automaticity. More usual in most classes, I fear, the primary objective seems to be the jaded one of the grammar translation approach to learn the body of rules by which the language functions.

Other matters in Lado's comment require attention. Three terms, *expression*, *content*, and *association*, will be defined in order to understand what happens in a speech activity and to remind ourselves of the difficulty beginning language students encounter.[4] Simplistically described, when someone starts to say something, he opens his mouth and emits a barrage of sound. The sound and how the speaker did it is *expression*. But, culture has assigned meaning to those sounds. That generally accepted meaning is the *content*. One proficient in the language automatically makes an *association* between the expression (sounds) and the content (meaning). An example to clarify: If I state, "Yesterday I had a marvelous time. I went to the mountains and glumpfed all afternoon." You would hear the sounds, and you would automatically make an association of content, except for one word. I used an expression, "glumpfed" to which our culture has assigned no meaning. Therefore, your association of expression and content was partial. However, if I change "glumpfed" to "skied" or "hiked," your association is complete and your understanding perfect.

What does this mean to us as Foreign Language teachers? In the beginning language class where is the attention of the student focused? On the problems of expression, of course, both upon hearing and speaking. Where must it be? On content. How can this be achieved? Only under conditions of practice to the point that problems of expression are resolved so that association can become automatic. This does not happen by merely teaching a student to pronounce given sounds correctly. It means that he must have the opportunity in the initial phases to hear each phrase or pattern repeatedly until he becomes proficient enough with what he hears that his attention can focus on content. It is also important to remember that each new unit of expression will present a new problem. The above leads to a maxim: We must provide repeated opportunities for students to hear and say any given units of expression.

Next I will discuss Lado's clarification of memory span.[5] *Recall* is the ability to remember something previously learned. It is memory in the usual sense. *Memory span* is the ability to hold something under attention and reproduce it. Please perform the following task which will lead to an understanding of the implications.

[4]Lado, p. 38.
[5]Lado, p. 34.

Read the following sentence, then without looking see how much of it you can repeat.

Grammar rules are useful tools
in learning a foreign language,
but they aren't speech.

Good. You were probably able to repeat most or all of it. Now read the following, then look up and repeat it as before.

Tools but learning in aren't rules
useful are grammar a language
speech foreign they.

A miserable attempt, wasn't it? Yet they were the same words, merely rearranged. What happened? Since the second example had no content, you were unable to hold it under attention and reproduce it. In other words, when the association of expression and content is impossible, your memory span is practically non-existent. What does this mean to us foreign language teachers? We often expect the impossible. All of us are familiar with the frustrated student who struggles through half an utterance, then looks up and says, "What was that again?" The above explains why. One's memory span in the initial phases of learning a foreign language is minimal. Only through repeated experiences with identical or very similar materials can it be lengthened to approach one's ability in his native language.

This leads us to a word about bilingualism. When we state that someone is bilingual we usually mean that he has more or less equal ability in two languages. To achieve that level of ability in a beginning foreign language class is impossible. So, let us establish a different view toward what we can hope to accomplish. Brooks defines two different systems in using a foreign language. He labels them *compound* and *coordinate* ability.[6] A *compound* system is one in which some aspects of the new language are learned, yet the mother tongue continues to dominate. With this level of ability, one hears an utterance in the foreign language and usually must go through a halting, if not painful, process of decoding into the native language before understanding is complete. Should he wish to answer, he frames his thought in the native language, laboriously translates it into the target language, then utters it, perhaps imperfectly. Unfortunately, too many students, and not just learning disabled students, never get beyond this level. A *coordinate* system is one in which the features of the target language are learned to a point that they function independently. One's mental processes, according to Brooks, remain entirely in the target language with little, or no, interference from the mother tongue.

[6] Brooks, pp. 49-52, p. 267.

Of the two systems, which should be our objective? Coordinate ability, without question. I believe too few teachers retain the objective as a constant goal. They expect coordinate ability after the first week with greetings, answering the question, "How are you?" or with name exchanges; then promptly set out to teach all additional materials in ways that can only lead to a very uncomfortable compound system. All students, and particularly the Learning Disabled, have the right to expect a teacher to provide well planned practices in sufficient amount to assure that they can at least approach the ease of comprehension and speaking characteristic of coordinate ability. Naturally, we can never achieve it totally, and the level of achievement will vary with individual students, but if one keeps the concept constantly in mind as each day's presentation is prepared, a higher level of facility is assured.

This leads to a discussion of Lado's concepts of *trace*, *facility*, and *habit*.[1] Each new experience with a given learning objective leaves "a trace in the memory store of the individual." Repeated experiences, if properly planned, lead to facility. Then, additional exposures should be planned to lead to habit. What does this mean in terms of planning our classes? In too many classrooms, an assignment is made, discussed the next day, or perhaps partially practiced, and then dropped until it's time for a quiz. Our students are left with nothing but a trace. Such procedures assure that they will never attain anything other than a painful compound ability. Their experience with the foreign language will be merely a prolonged process of problem solving. On the other hand, the teacher who designs classes to assure repeated experiences with a given objective can expect students to acquire facility, or perhaps, ideally, the level of habit performance.

All of the above discussion leads to a simple conclusion. We must plan our teaching to provide students the opportunity for sufficient meaningful practice to assure the following:

1. That the student's attention can shift from problems of *expression* to *content*.
2. That he proceeds in carefully planned presentations *from trace*, through facility to *habit*.
3. That his ability improves from compound to *coordinate*.
4. And that students, instead of *problem solving*, are *communicating*.

How is that accomplished? Certain strategies can help.

[1] Lado, p. 39.

III. STRATEGIES

The primary reason that so many students remain at the problem solving, compound ability level, is that they are confronted with too many objectives and too much material simultaneously. This can be remedied by a simple principle that will assure a careful sequencing of materials and activities. One should always plan classes to proceed from the simple to the complex or, put another way, from the precise to the general.

As I write, I have before me a text which is unfortunately typical of many on the market. Opening it to a chapter at random I first see a dialogue in which the lines vary in length from six words to twenty-four. Experience tells me that no student can be expected to perform an utterance of that length with any facility because of his memory span. Such a dialogue becomes merely an exercise in reading. I turn the page and see an all too familiar pronunciation exercise involving four different sounds with only five examples of each. Going on, I find a grammar presentation of six nonrelated examples. All the grammar is presented at once. Then it is followed by a smattering of practices, each only in the slightest way related to the others. The practices end with a lengthy translation task in which the sentences are as long or longer than the dialogue lines. The entire presentation seems purposely designed to lead to problem solving rather than automaticity.

When, confronted with such materials, it is the teacher's task to edit, rearrange, and plan presentations with the maxims, simple to complex, precise to general, in mind. Why burden a student with several objectives at once? One the contrary, limit each teaching objective to the minimum. Never begin with the total picture. Let's assume a typical teaching objective, the contrast between *Ser* and *Estar* in Spanish, for example.[8] I have a choice. I can begin by enumerating all the uses of *Ser*, then all the uses of *Estar*, then design some practices to see if the student can solve the resulting problems. Such a procedure is mind boggling. It assures that the student will be uncomfortable, and that he will have little chance of developing any facility.

On the other hand, I can present over a period of time each use of *Ser*, or each use of *Estar*, as a separate and distinct objective, which it is, and develop materials and practices to assure facility in *each* of the various uses. The contrast between *Ser* and *Estar* matters only in the use of them with a predicate adjective, or with certain concepts of location, each of which, again, is a precise, very manageable objective. After each of the various objectives is carefully presented and practiced, then at some later date it probably does the student no harm to see all the uses of the two verbs listed on one page as a review of what he now should be comfortable with; but even then, it probably isn't necessary that he be

[8] *Ser* and *Estar*: For those unfamiliar with Spanish, these two verbs are both equivalents of the English "to be."

presented with such a general view. In short, when you ask a student of Spanish: "¿Que hora es?" (What time is it?), do you want him to think: "Oh yes. *Ser* is used for telling time, so which form is it?" Or do you want him to be able to tell you the time, easily, with as little problem solving as possible? The question surely requires no answer.

After one's objective has been narrowed to the minimum, then what? I have found that the plan of presentation developed by the linguistic methodologists of modelling, repetition, practice and variation is a successful procedure. Let's enlarge upon those steps.

The first step, besides modelling, should include a brief but precise statement of your objective. Your materials should be carefully selected so that each item is a good example of the objective you have stated. These are then modelled to the point that you can be sure that the students' attention can focus on content. In other words, model until you feel that each student has reached a safety level of understanding with most of the problems of expression, from the hearing standpoint, having been overcome.

With the second step, give the students sufficient opportunity to repeat the models until, as in hearing, they can feel at ease with the problems of expression in speaking.

Next, practice the material using a variety of practices and approaches, always designed from the more simple to the more complex. Your aim, of course, is to gradually lead the student to the ability to communicate.

The fourth step is the most essential. The material must be varied and applied to different circumstances. If the linguistic method was not as successful for some teachers as for others, I believe it was probably because they overlooked this vital procedure. If the student is left with only the partial experience of the rather rote performances of the first three steps, he cannot hope to achieve fluency. The ability to vary the structural patterns of the language and apply them in many circumstances is essential for automaticity. It is also this step that makes full use of the tremendous power of analogy that all students possess. The teacher should provide repeated experiences with utterances similar to, yet different from, those learned in the first three steps so that the student can become aware of the hidden sameness of the structural pattern and learn to apply them to other situations.

To the above four steps I would add another. One should always attempt to personalize the material wherever possible, and try to find ways to relate it to each student's own experiences. By doing so the materials become truly meaningful. For the creative teacher ways to do so will not be hard to find. To give a simple example: Let's assume a teaching objective of facility with *Gustar* in Spanish.[9] After the initial phases of modelling, repetition, practice and variation, it is effective and easy to ask

[9] *Gustar*. This verb is the equivalent of "to like" in English, but means "to be pleasing to" so English speaking students have difficulty because of the interference of the English pattern.

students to state their own likes and dislikes. Those statements can then serve as a basis for class involvement and additional practice.

To recapitulate, if our objective has been reduced to the minimum, in the above steps of presentation there is a built-in guarantee of proceeding from the simple to the complex; of leading students from the *trace* obtained in the initial phases to the *facility* of the later presentations; and of assuring that they proceed from the *compound* ability of the early presentations to the opportunity to be *coordinate* in the final stages when they are using the material for communication. There is also a built-in progression from the rote experiences of the first two steps to a greater reliance on analogy in the last three. The modelling and repetition phases have been criticized as being boring. My experience has been that they are dull only if that's all the students experience. If they know that those practices are designed to lead them to comfortable usage of the material later, they participate actively and enthusiastically.

Naturally, all of the above steps do not occur on the same day. Let us examine how to plan a class hour that will make incorporation of them possible.

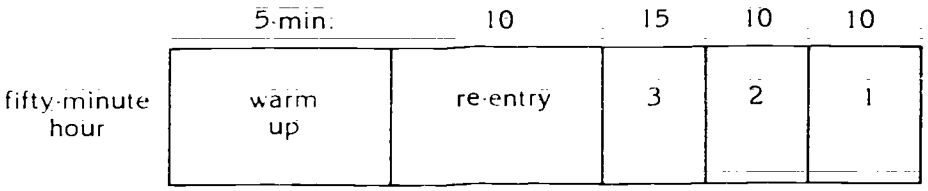
IV. PLANNING A CLASS HOUR

Remember that our objective is to provide repeated experiences with similar yet varied materials. Of the techniques that Learning Disabled students told me helped them to achieve success, that was the most frequently mentioned. The simple fact that I announced that my teaching approach would provide that opportunity helped them to relax and to begin the class with a hopeful attitude. Remember that some of them had been told that they could probably never learn a second language because of their disability.

There are currently textual materials available that have solved the problem of repeated experiences and re-entry of objectives for the teacher in carefully prepared instructor's manuals. Lacking those, what can a teacher using more traditional materials do to assure that all the principles discussed above can be incorporated into the class presentations? I will present a simple format which has worked very well for me. It provides at least five opportunities for re-entry of any particular material. Briefly outlined, any given objective is

1. Presented the first day.
2. Practiced the next.
3. Varied, personalized, and perhaps tested on the third day.
4. Re-entered later on any day of the teacher's choice.
5. Re-entered again on any day as warm-up material for re-enforcement.

To be more precise about the actual class planning, let's assume a typical week of five classes of fifty minutes each, and divide each class into five segments. Let's assign a very flexible time to each. The first segment we will reserve for a warm-up. The second, for re-entry of any previously presented objective. The remaining three will be used for the various steps of presentation discussed above. Numbering from the last segment backwards, a typical class hour will be arranged as follows.



In segment one we will present the new material. The steps of that presentation should include:

1. A precise statement of the objective.
2. Establishing the meaning of any new vocabulary.
3. Oral and perhaps visual modelling.
4. Choral repetition.
5. Depending on the level of difficulty, perhaps some practice, choral mixed with individual responses.
6. A concise assignment made in such a way that the students know exactly what is expected of them.

The material presented in segment one moves the next day to segment two for additional practice and variation. Depending on the nature and difficulty of the material, perhaps some additional modelling and repetition will be necessary before moving to more complex practices. Those practices should be varied, and proceed always from the simpler to the more difficult ones. The aim is to gradually lead the students to the ability to use the material in conversation.

The above then moves the next day to segment three for additional variation and, if possible, personalization. By this time one can expect the students to be using the material with considerable facility. It is in this third presentation that one can create situations where students are required to converse—with the teacher, with one another in groups, or in conversational pairs. Ideally, testing the material should be postponed until this phase, or perhaps later in the re-entry segment.

The next step is to re-enter the same objective on any later day for additional variation to obtain even greater facility. If needed, one can then use it later as warm-up material, at which time the students, if not at the level of habit, should have at least acquired coordinate ability.

In résumé, a typical week can be planned as follows.

Minutes:	5	10	15	10	10
Monday	Warm Up	Reentry			Presentation of Material (1)
Tuesday	Warm Up	Reentry		Practice and Variation of (1)	Presentation of material (2)
Wednesday	Warm Up	Reentry	Variation and Personalization of (1)	Practice and Variation of (2)	Presentation of Material (3)
Thursday	Warm Up	Reentry	Variation and Personalization of (2)	Practice and Variation of (3)	Presentation of Material (4)
Friday	Warm Up	Reentry	Variation and Personalization of (3)	Practice and Variation of (4)	Presentation of Material (5)

Notice how the material presented as Objective I moves through the first three days of the week; to be re-entered later in the re-entry and warm-up phases if needed. Remember that the times are completely flexible. Even the format need not be rigid. One can use different segments for different purposes as one chooses. However, I prefer the above because it allows for a procedure from very comfortable, coordinate material at the first part of the hour to less familiar material, and finally, to new, compound material at the end.

To repeat, the essential principle is to proceed from the simple to the complex as we gradually lead students to conversational ability with any given material. Let's now apply that principle to some precise teaching practices.

V. TEACHING TECHNIQUES

Let us relate the above procedures to teaching a dialogue, since in most textual materials, it is still the principal vehicl of presentation.

Initial presentation

A. State your objective.

B. Establish the meaning by any one or several or the following ways:
   1. visual aids, pictures, slides, films, realia, etc.
   2. synonyms
   3. antonyms
   4. cognates
   5. dramatization
   6. paraphrases
   7. As a last resort, give the meaning in English.
C. Model each line to a safety level of understanding.
D. Choral, interspersed with individual repetition, by words, if needed, then by phrases, then by total line.

Second presentation

A. Additional repetition.

B. Practice of actual dialogue lines
   1. choral, teacher and class
   2. small groups
   3. pairs
   4. individuals acting it out
C. Selected dialogue lines can be used for variation of structural or lexical practice.

Third presentation

A. Use English to cue the known response.
B. Questions based on dialogue content.
C. Personalized questions.

Later presentation

A. Restate dialogue in third person paraphrase.
B. Redo the dialogue as narrative.
C. Additional personalization.
D. Use selected lines from the dialogue as a starting point for introducing a structural objective.

Let's see next how the same format can be used for grammar presentations.

To serve as a convenient example, let's assume the same objective that was mentioned previously: the use of *Ser* or *Estar* with predicate adjectives. Of the many possible types of practices, I will outline briefly some

of them which a teacher can select to lead students to facility. I will use English examples, and will explain the practice only when I feel there may be some doubt as to how the activity is to be conducted. Naturally, I will not provide as many examples as would be used in an actual presentation. The following serve as suggestions, rather than completed activities. Note how the activities progress from simple to more complex as we proceed from the first presentations to subsequent ones.

INTITIAL PHASE

We will follow the procedures described previously. (Assumed: Familiarity with forms of *Ser* and *Estar* and with meaning of vocabulary.)

Activity

1. State the objective succinctly and clarify it as briefly as possible.
2. Establish the meaning of new vocabulary.
3. Modelling

Ser	*Estar*
I am intelligent (stupid).	*(bored, tired)*
He is handsome (ugly).	*(ill, well)*
We are rich (poor).	*(contented, sad)*
My mother is young (old).	*(busy, worried)*
My friends are short (tall).	*(seated, standing)*
etc.	*etc.*

4. *Repetition of the above, plus others.*

Next presentation

1. Simple substitution
   Ser: I am intelligent. (handsome, rich, intelligent, young, egotistical, etc.), plus others.
   Estar: He is bored. (tired, ill, contented, sad, busy, etc.), plus others.
   Then mix the *Ser* and *Estar* cues.
2. Add on practice (excellent for memory span).
   Ser:

Teacher	*Students*
I am handsome.	I am handsome.
(young)	I am handsome and young.
(rich)	I am handsome, young and rich.
(intelligent)	I am handsome, young, rich and intelligent.

2. Add on practice (continued)

Estar:

Teacher	*Students*
He is tired.	*He is tired.*
(bored)	*He is tired and bored.*
(ill)	*He is tired, bored and ill.*
(sad)	*His tired, bored, ill and sad.*

3. *Two slot substitution.*

I am good looking.

She .....

..... *rich.*

You .....

etc.

4. Visual-Lingual Substitution. (The teacher cues each item in Col. I with all items of Col. II, thus providing 25 opportunities for rapid choral response.) On chalkboard, transparency or ditto:

	I		*II*
1.	I		1. sick
2.	You		2. handsome
3.	My friend	Ser	3. contented
4.	John and I	Estar	4. well
5.	They		5. rich

5. Written or Verbal (visual-lingual substitution). The teacher calls for various number combinations in the previous practice. A student then speaks or writes the sentence called for.

Teacher	*Student*
3-4	My friend is well.
5-2	They are handsome.

6. Tag questions (approaching conversational ability).

Teacher:	Your father is goodlooking. And your mother?
Student:	My mother is goodlooking also. etc.

7. Either-Or questions.

Teacher:	Are you sad or contented?

Is your mother tall or short?
etc.

8. Ask him — Tell him.

Teacher:	John, ask Mary if she is tired.
John:	Mary, are you tired?
Teacher:	Mary, tell John that you aren't tired, but that you don't feel well.
Mary:	I'm not tired, but I don't feel well.
	etc.

Later Presentations

1. Question — Answer: teacher-student; group to group; student pairs; written or oral.

   How's your Dad?
   What's your mom like?
   Is your girl friend pretty?
   etc.

2. Personalization.
   a. Solicit from five to ten students descriptions of something or someone meaningful to them. Write their statements on the board, then use them as a point of departure for conversation.

Example:	Suppose John states:
	My house is very big and pretty.
	It is near the school.
Or:	My girl friend is slender, pretty and intelligent.
Then:	How is John's house?
	Where is it?
	What's John's girl friend like?
	etc.

   b. Student pairs. Have students describe to each other their parents, house, boy or girl friend, their favorite person, etc.
   c. Who am I? Have a student assume the identity of another member of the class. The other students must determine who he is through questions:

      Who am I? (continued)
      Are you a man or woman? I am a woman.

Are you tall or short? I am tall.
Are you blond or dark? I am dark.
Are you slender or fat? I am fat.
Well, you are Maria, right? Yes, I am Maria.

3. Narration or composition. Students may prepare a longer description or something either freely chosen or determined by the teacher. Instructions could be: Tell me ten things about your favorite person, favorite place, your neighborhood, your city, your state, etc.
4. English-Target language. Use English to solicit known responses.

Certainly, not all of the above activities will be needed for each objective, and just as certainly, other types of activities can be used. As I said previously, the practices outlined are merely suggestions of possible approaches. They can be adapted for any purpose. The procedure from the simple to the complex is designed to lead the students to considerable ease of expression. Note that they go from rote practices to those requiring more analogy, and that they proceed from cued responses to conversational activities.

VI. TEACHING MODALITIES AND OTHER PRACTICES

There are other things that learning disabled students have told me that are particularly helpful to them. Remember that the problems of LDs are extremely varied. One may have difficulty in reading or writing. Another may have trouble in hearing or speaking. Even among those who have dyslexia, resulting in severe reading and writing problems, each one's difficulty will be different from the next. So, finding a technique that is of particular benefit to one individual may not serve another as well. Also, with perhaps thirty students in a class, with maybe two to five LDs, there isn't sufficient time to determine the nature of each one's disability and devise a teaching approach to serve each one's need. Although it would be ideal to be able to do so, it doesn't seem practicable. So approaches that are helpful to the greatest number are needed.

In the HELDS project, I have learned that the more teaching modalities I can employ, and the greater the variety of experiences one can provide with each, the greater the chances of success. The four modalities are auditory, visual, kinesthetic, and tactile. Clearly the two most commonly used in a foreign language classroom are visual and auditory. Before my involvement in HELDS, in the auditory modality, I was content with

modelling and having the students repeat and vary materials to learn to hear and speak correctly. In the visual, I assumed that relating the sounds to the written symbols and providing sufficient opportunities for practice would result in the ability to read and write. Only in giving and having the students obey commands, or in teaching an occasional gesture did I ever relate movement (the kinesthetic modality) to my teaching, and I can think of no case in which I used the tactile modality. It wouldn't have occurred to me that touching or feeling things could help a student to achieve greater success in a foreign language classroom.

Through the HELDS project I have learned to ask a simple question each time I prepare a unit for presentation: Can this be presented in more than one way, a more effective way, or by using different modalities? That has helped me learn to incorporate different techniques and a variety of materials and approaches. In the visual area, where previously I had relied heavily on the textual materials, I now use transparencies, realia, visual grammar presentations,[10] charts, flash cards, etc. In teaching vocabulary, for example, particularly content words, it is far more effective to use realia and pictures rather than to allow the student to obtain the meaning by hearing or reading the English equivalent.

I also make far more frequent use of recorded materials than previously. I have begun to use the more talented students in the class as study aides for any student having difficulty, not just for the Learning Disabled. With their help I established just recently a daily help session outside of class to increase the students' opportunities for successful learning experiences. This relieves in part the pressure one feels to spend additional time with the LDs, time which is difficult to find.

I have just begun to explore the possibilities of alternative testing procedures. Clearly, one must not lower class standards to accommodate those students with special difficulties. The four objectives of hearing, speaking, reading and writing are valid, and a student's progress in each area must be evaluated. However, if students have exceptional problems in writing, I see nothing wrong with providing them additional credits in speaking, in which they may excel.

In closing, my present situation is one of research and experimentation to improve my teaching in any way I can for the benefit of the Learning Disabled students in particular and, as a result, for all students. Although I have been able to refine the above principle and techniques to some degree, and have learned to incorporate different approaches, much remains to be learned. I am grateful for the opportunity for growth which the HELDS project has provided.

[10] William E. Bull, et al., *Spanish for Communication, Visual Grammar of Spanish* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972).

APPENDIX

Criterion and Behavioral Checklist for Adults with Specific Learning Disabilities

1. Short attention span.
2. Restlessness.
3. Distractability. (The student seems especially sensitive to sounds or visual stimuli and has difficulty ignoring them while studying.)
4. Poor motor coordination. (This may be seen as clumsiness.)
5. Impulsivity. (Responding without thinking.)
6. Perseveration. (The student tends to do or say things over and over. Mechanism that says "finished" does not work well.)
7. Handwriting is poor. (Letters will not be well formed, spacing between words and letters will be inconsistent, writing will have an extreme up or down slant on unlined page.)
8. Spelling is consistently inconsistent.
9. Inaccurate copying. (The student has difficulty copying things from the chalkboard and from textbooks: for instance, math problems may be off by one or two numbers that have been copied incorrectly or out of sequence.)
10. Can express self well orally but fails badly when doing so in writing. In a few cases the reverse is true.
11. Frequently misunderstands what someone is saying. (For instance, a student may say, "What?", and then may or may not answer appropriately before someone has a chance to repeat what was said previously.)
12. Marked discrepancy between what student is able to understand when listening or reading.
13. Has trouble with variant word meanings and figurative language.
14. Has problems structuring (organizing) time -- The person is frequently late to class and appointments; seems to have no "sense of how long a "few minutes" is opposed to an hour; has trouble pacing self during tests.

15. Has problems structuring (organizing) space -- The student may have difficulty concentrating on work when in a large, open area -- even when it's quiet; may over or under-reach when trying to put something on a shelf (depth perception).

16. Has difficulty spacing an assignment on a page, e.g., math problems are crowded together.

17. Thoughts -- ideas wander and/or are incomplete in spoken and written language. Student may also have difficulty sequencing ideas.

18. Sounds -- A student's hearing acuity may be excellent, but when his brain processes the sounds used in words, the sequence of sounds may be out of order: e.g., the student hears "aminal" instead of "animal" and may say and/or write the "aminal."

19. Visual selectivity -- May have 20/20 vision but when brain processes visual information, e.g., pictures, graphs, words, numbers, student may be unable to focus visual attention selectively; in other words, everything from a flyspeck to a key word in a title has equal claim on attention.

20. Word retrieval problems -- the student has difficulty recalling words that have been learned.

21. Misunderstands non-verbal information, such as facial expressions or gestures.

22. Very slow worker -- but may be extremely accurate.

23. Very fast worker -- but makes many errors and tends to leave out items.

24. Visual images -- Has 20/20 vision but may see things out of sequence, e.g., "frist" for "first," "961" for "691." Or, a student may see words or letters as if they are turned around or upside down: e.g., "cug" for "cup," or "dub" for "bud," or "9" for "L" for "7," etc.

25. Makes literal interpretations. You will have to have them give you feedback on verbal directions, etc.

26. Judges books by their thickness because of frustration when learning to read.

27. Has mixed dominance: e.g., student may be right handed and left eyed.

28. Moodiness - Quick tempered, frustration.

29. Cannot look people in the eyes and feels uncomfortable when talking to others.

30. Has trouble answering yes or no to questions.

Students with specific learning disabilities which affect their performance in math generally fall into two groups:

1. Those students whose language processing (input and output) and/or reading abilities are impaired. These students will have great difficulty doing word problems; however, if the problems are read to them, they will be able to do them.

2. Those students whose abilities necessary to do quantitative thinking are impaired. These students often have one or more problems such as the following:

A. Difficulty in visual-spatial organization and in integrating nonverbal material. For example, a student with this kind of problem will have trouble estimating distances, distinguishing differences in amounts, sizes, shapes, and lengths. Student may also have trouble looking at groups of objects and telling what contains the greater amount. This student frequently has trouble organizing and sequencing material meaningfully on a page.

B. Difficulty in integrating kinesthetic processes. For example, a student will be inaccurate in copying problems from a textbook or chalkboard onto a piece of paper. The numbers may be out of sequence or the wrong numbers (e.g., copying "6" for "5"). Problems may be out of alignment on the paper. Graph paper is a must for them.

C. Difficulty in visually processing information. Numbers will be misperceived: "6" and "9," "3" and "8" and "9" are often confused. The student may also have trouble revisualizing, i.e., calling up the visual memory of what a number looks like or how a problem should be laid out on a page.

D. Poor sense of time and direction. Usually, students in the second group have the auditory and/or kinesethic as their strongest learning channels. They need to use manipulative materials accompanied by oral explanations from the instructor. They often need to have many experiences with concrete materials before they can move on successfully to the abstract and symbolic level of numbers.

HELDS Project
Myrtle Snyder, Director HELDS
Educational Opportunities Program
Central Washington University
Ellensburg, Washington 98926
(509) 963-2131
EEO/AA/TITLE IX INSTITUTION